

Media representation of China in Malaysia: Television news coverage of najib razak's visit in 2016

Ng Hooi-Sean, author

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Abstrak

The increasing prominence of China on the world stage has sparked scholarly interest in studying the country's representation in the media. Also driving the enthusiasm is the global expansion of Chinese state media, which some refer to as an attempt to export Chinese propaganda. Research on the topic in Southeast Asia remains lacking despite the region's being in China's backyard. This qualitative study aims to narrow the knowledge gap by looking at China's representation in Malaysia. Using content analysis and in-depth interviews, it examines specifically the coverage of former Prime Minister Najib Razak's 2016 visit to China by the Malay, Mandarin, and English bulletins on public and private television. The results show that China's portrayal in the coverage is positive, notwithstanding the stories indicating concerns about the implications of China's rise. The outcome points to the dominance of the state narrative, with instances of the press breaking the authorities' restrictions to inform the audience. It appears that the reportage was not much impacted by Chinese media's efforts to go global. Drawing on the Hierarchy of Influences model, the study demonstrates that the representation of China in Malaysian media coverage is a product shaped by intertwined social, cultural, and political factors as complex as Malaysian society.